Introduction to the TAPS special issue of *Primary Science*

Sarah Earle introduces TAPS and this special issue of Primary Science

The Teacher Assessment in Primary Science (TAPS) project is funded by the Primary Science Teaching Trust (PSTT) and based at Bath Spa University (BSU). It began in 2013 with the aim to develop support and guidance to enable teachers to assess primary science in a way that would be as valid, reliable and manageable as possible. TAPS resources are placed on the PSTT website: **https://pstt.org.uk/resources/curriculum-materials/assessment** and new resources will continue to be added. This special issue of *Primary Science* is designed to bring together a range of perspectives on the TAPS resources and how they are being used to support teacher assessment in different contexts.

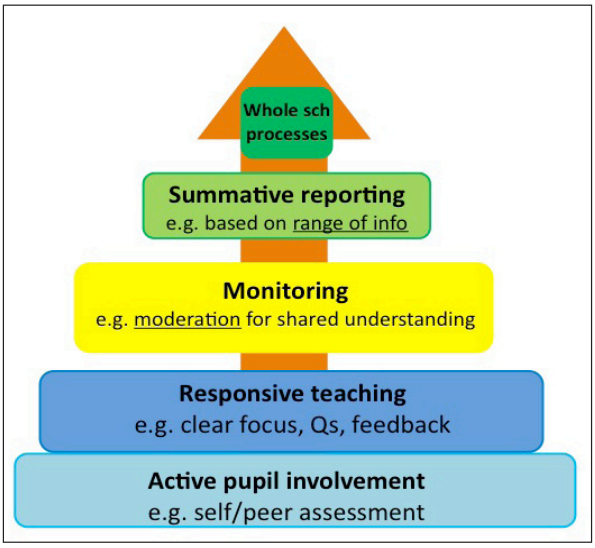
In its first year, the research team and project teachers operationalised a model of teacher assessment put forward by a group of experts convened by the Nuffield Foundation (2012), and created the TAPS pyramid model for school self-evaluation. The key principles version of the TAPS pyramid (see Figure 1) shows how classroom assessment information (the blue layers at the base of the pyramid) can be summarised for reporting purposes (the green layers), moderated by the middle yellow layer. The article by **Bethan Jones, Ruth Coakley, Lisa Fenn** and **Dan Davies** will explain the TAPS pyramid model in more detail and consider how TAPS Cymru is utilising it to support school self-evaluation of teacher assessment in Wales. **Isabel Hopwood-Stephens** will consider the dissemination of the TAPS pyramid and how a sample of teachers describes its use.

At the centre of the TAPS pyramid is a 'shared understanding' box, which has been a key area of development for many schools. **Carol Sampey** explains how a shared understanding of science has been developed in her school, whilst **Pauline Rodger** describes how moderation activities have been used to develop a shared understanding of assessment.

However, many schools find it difficult to begin a discussion about assessment in primary science and, more recently, we have found that 'Focused Assessment' is a 'way in' for schools where there is not yet a shared understanding. **Kendra McMahon** explains the Focused Assessment approach and how it can support assessment of scientific enquiry. **Kerry-Anne Barber** describes how Focused Assessment has been used as part of a whole school approach to assessment. **James Mepsted** explains how he first raised the profile of science enquiry, before then rolling out a Focused Assessment approach to assess 'Working Scientifically'. In the final article, **Asima Qureshi** and **James Petrucco** consider how TAPS Focused Assessment can be used to support transition at the beginning and end of the primary school. 'TAPS Transition' is one of the current areas for research, together with exploration and development of TAPS for Northern Ireland (2017-18) and Scotland (2018-19).

Key to TAPS is the collaboration between researchers and teachers to develop support that will have an impact on practice. It is hoped that the many voices in this special issue provide an insight into the ongoing work of the TAPS project.

Figure 1 Key principles version of the TAPS pyramid model)



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Other members of the BSU TAPS team include Kendra McMahon, Alan Howe and Chris Collier.

See Sarah and others explain the TAPS approach here: **http://tinyurl.com/TAPSplaylist** and the resources available here: **http://tinyurl.com/TAPSsupport**